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**STATEMENT BY VICE PRESIDENT RICHARD B. CHENEY**

As I depart the great city of Sydney, I want to thank the people of Australia and the government of Prime Minister Howard for their gracious hospitality during my visit. The Prime Minister, senior ministers of his government, and I discussed a wide range of issues and agreed that the alliance between our two countries has never been stronger, nor more vital to protecting and promoting our shared values of freedom, democracy and free enterprise.

We devoted considerable time to discussions of the joint efforts of our countries to support the democratically-elected governments of Iraq and Afghanistan. I expressed America's deep appreciation for the significant contributions that Australia is making in the global war on terror, and especially for the crucial activities of the courageous members of the Australian Defense Force. We welcome the continuing involvement of Australian forces in these critical fronts in the broader war on terror, including Australia's Overwatch Battle Group, which is playing such an important role in training and supporting Iraqi forces in southern Iraq.

As has been the case for almost a century, Australia and the United States stand side by side in confronting common dangers around the world. I am grateful to the people of Australia for their warm welcome during my visit and for their steadfast friendship to the United States.

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